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Hearing held before

Subcommittee of the
Committee on Foreign Relations

S. 138

TO PROVIDE AID TO PERSONS IN THE UNITED STATES
DESIROUS OF MIGRATING TO THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

June 3, 1953

Washington, D. C.

WARD & PAUL

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C O N T E N T S

TESTIMONY OF

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President, Universal African Nationalist
Movement, Inc.

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S. 138

TO PROVIDE AID TO PERSONS IN THE UNITED STATES
DESIROUS OF MIGRATING TO THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

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Wednesday, June 3, 1953

United States Senate,
Subcommittee of the Committee on
Foreign Relations,
Washington, D. C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 4:40 p.m.,
in the Foreign Relations Committee Room, U. S. Capitol,
Senator William Langer presiding.

Present: Senators Langer (presiding), and Mansfield.

Also present: Dr. Kalijarvi.

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Senator Langer. This is a hearing on S. 138.

(S. 138 is as follows:)

Senator Langer. I will swear you all at one time. If you will stand up, I will swear you in.

You do solemnly swear, each of you, that the testimony you are about to give in this pending matter will be the truth, the whole truth, nothing but the truth, so help you God?

(There was a chorus of "I do.")

Senator Langer. Who is your first witness? State your name and address, your place of residence.

TESTIMONY OF BENJAMIN GIBBONS,

PRESIDENT, UNIVERSAL AFRICAN NATIONALIST MOVEMENT, INC.

Mr. Gibbons. Benjamin Gibbons, president of the Universal African Nationalist Movement, Inc., 100-2 West 116th Street, New York 26, New York.

Senator Langer. You are the president of this organization?

Mr. Gibbons. Yes, sir.

Senator Langer. And you are authorized to speak for them?

Mr. Gibbons. Yes, sir.

Senator Langer. And these other ladies and gentlemen here are directors of your organization, most of them?

Mr. Gibbons. Yes, sir.

Senator Langer. I see. How large a membership have you?

Mr. Gibbons. We have a membership of ten to eleven thousand.

Senator Langer. You also have branches?

Mr. Gibbons. Yes, sir.

Senator Langer. Will you tell us for the record where those branches are located.

Mr. Gibbons. We have one in New York, one in Newark, one in Pittsburgh, Forest Hills, Arkansas; we have one in Muskogee, Oklahoma; and we have some representatives in Florida, Louisiana, Alabama, and we have other units in the West Indies. But the whole organization comprises a number of about ten to eleven thousand members.

Senator Langer. You also have an organization and a branch in Los Angeles?

Mr. Gibbons. Yes, sir.

Senator Langer. You did not mention that one. Any other states besides that which you have left out here?

Mr. Gibbons. No, sir.

Senator Langer. You may proceed with your testimony, Mr. Gibbons.

Mr. Gibbons. Senator Langer --

Senator Langer. This is Senator Mansfield.

Mr. Gibbons. Senator Mansfield.

Senator Langer. Senator Tobey of New Hampshire left his proxy with us.

Mr. Gibbons. Mr. Chairman, Senator Mansfield, and my colleagues, first I want to express appreciation to Senator Langer for --

Senator Langer. We are not interested in that; we are

talking about the bill. Leave all that stuff out.

Mr. Gibbons. I have a document here which was written by the Liberian Government, and I feel this should be mentioned here, with the permission of the chairman. I would like to present it to you or I could read it.

Senator Langer. Go ahead and read it, because we are very much interested in what the Liberian Government has to say. You know what it is?

Senator Mansfield. Yes, indeed.

Mr. Gibbons. "Embassy of Liberia, Washington, November 14, 1950.

"Dear Mr. Gibbons:

"Regarding your request for a statement of my Government's views relating to Bill S.1880 introduced in the Senate of the United States of America" --

Senator Langer. That is the same bill as S. 138 --

Mr. Gibbons. Yes, sir.

Senator Langer. (Continuing) -- except that is in another session.

Mr. Gibbons. Yes, sir.

"Regarding your request for a statement of my Government's views relating to Bill S. 1880 introduced in the Senate of the United States of America, I would like for you and your organization to understand that it is not the policy of the Government of Liberia to express itself in the affairs of the

citizens of a foreign government and therefore this statement as requested by you cannot be interpreted and misconstrued that it is an act to influence the Government of Liberia.

"Your Organization requested the Liberian Government's permission for carrying out an immigration and settlement plan. An agreement was made in 1947 at which time it was pointed out that all expenses involved in such a matter would be borne by your Organization.

"If the Senate proposes to give aid to citizens of the United States of America who wish to come to Liberia to work and live it seems that such a matter would come under the final determination of the Government of the United States. Liberia would not object to the United States giving aid to citizens who would like to go to Liberia to work and live there, but it must be understood that in the event your Organization is able to acquire assistance such an assistance would not impose any financial obligation or responsibility on Liberia. Your Organization would receive such assistance as was made known to you in September 1947.

"Very truly yours,

"Gabriel L. Dennis."

He is the Secretary of State of the Republic of Liberia.

Senator Mansfield. That letter, Mr. Gibbons, was sent from Liberia, is that correct?

Mr. Gibbons. I met Mr. Dennis here in Washington.

Senator Mansfield. I see.

Mr. Gibbons. And he prepared it and signed it and gave it to me.

Senator Mansfield. Is Mr. Dennis still the Secretary of State for Liberia?

Mr. Gibbons. Yes, sir.

2) I also have a statement by the Government of Liberia with reference to its immigration policy, and with the permission of the chairman I would like to read it.

"A Statement by the Government of Liberia with Reference to Its Immigration Policy.

"Considerable misconceptions abroad of the Liberian Government's Immigration Policy seem often to lead to misconstructions which are neither supported by policy, the law defining its extent and limitations nor the facts.

"From the organization of the Government of the Commonwealth in 1822 to the establishment of the National Government in 1847, every Administration has made welcome declarations to peoples of color throughout the world who would like to come and aid in the development of what had been conceived to be a politically, industrially and economically potential Republic with the right to work, live and think freely.

"It is seen therefore that since the foundation of the Republic, Government has maintained a policy of accepting immigration as a contributing factor to national life and

development. The measures to be adopted for effectuating this desired objective are, however, regulated by statutes enacted from time to time by the Liberian Legislature, the provisions of which are to be implicitly observed.

"In 1864, a special statute was passed which provided:

"That as soon after the passage of this Act, as possible, the President be and he is hereby authorized and requested, to enter into such arrangements and shall, in the most economical manner, in view of our pecuniary embarrassments, increase the population of Liberia, by renewing the invitation extended in 1862 to persons of African Descent in the West Indian Islands to Liberia, aiding worthy and industrious persons in the said Islands to emigrate to this Republic."

"That as an additional inducement to persons to emigrate to Liberia from the West Indies a grant of ten acres of land be assigned to each single individual, and of twenty-five acres to each family." (Acts of 1863-4, page 24, Sections one and three).

"As a further encouragement along this line, an Act of 1938 of the Legislature of the Republic which required, that among other prerequisites, that an applicant for citizenship must have resided in the Republic for at least two years after the filing of a declaration of intention, was again amended by Act of 1947-48 to provide:

"That from and after the passage of this Act, Section Six

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of the legislation entitled "An Act Relating to 'Naturalization,'" passed at the Session, 1938, be and the same is hereby amended to provide that the President of Liberia is authorized and empowered to waive the probationary period in the case of any applicant or applicants applying for naturalization after filing his Declaration of Intention and allow such applicant or applicants to become citizen immediately.'

"President Tubman, in his Inaugural Address of January 3, 1944, declared the immigration policy of his Administration which is consistent with our national policy in this respect.

"The present immigration policy of the Liberian Government fully recognizes that, the office and purpose of the founding of this Republic was to offer a home for all the sons and daughters of Africa - those who were originally here, those who came, and those who shall come hereafter.

"And in accordance with this genetic idea, the organic law of the nation forbids the passage of any law by the Legislature that will prevent immigration; thus implying the intentions of the Founders of our Country to keep open the Nation's doors to those who would join us and assist in building this national superstructure.

"The policy further recognizes that, as much as we may desire immigration to assist in the task set before us of spreading the light of Christianity, education and civilization among all classes of our citizenry, and with them create a strong

united State, yet such immigration, in order to be useful and effective, must not be indiscriminate and merely sentimental, but rather carefully planned and selected upon physical and moral standards.

"In the encouragement of immigration, the policy also recognizes that the standard of living and the standard of citizenship of a nation are its most precious possessions, and that the preservation and elevation of these standards are the first duties of government. In view of this fact, we desire to ensure that the number of immigrants to the country at any one time should not exceed that which can be assimilated with reasonable rapidity.

"In pursuance of this policy, Government has been most liberal and hospitable under the aegis of the ambitious developmental program of the present administration. Not only have we received with open hands of welcome immigrants of recent times, but wherever it has been found practicable, employments have been given to those of them who showed ability in the various fields of national endeavor.

"Engineers have been placed in prominent positions of our Department of Public Works and Utilities, and some in the Radio Service; those interested in education have been employed in the Education Department; those inclined towards farming have been given every opportunity and encouragement to cultivate their land-grants; while others, to the extent of their individual

training, were able to take up employment in the various commercial and industrial enterprises now operating in the country. And all this within a comparatively short space of time after their arrival.

"The practical outline of courtesies and opportunities, however, implies no obligation on the part of government, but merely goes to show the inducements characteristic of our immigration policy.

"The Government and people of Liberia do continue to offer welcome to those who, being mindful of the inevitable preliminary difficulties which naturally beset a venture such as ours, are willing to come over and join in the national effort to build and perpetuate a great African State of political, economic and social freedom; but we desire to make it clear that it would be an unfortunate conclusion on the part of any prospective immigrants to mistake such a welcome for the promise of a paradise, and only those imbued with the pioneering spirit should come here. None without reverence and admiration for the magnificent and almost singular national achievements of the leadership of this Government and its people of more than a hundred years should expect admittance.

"Department of State, Monrovia, Liberia."

I have here, Mr. Chairman and Senator Mansfield, the agreement which was signed by the Liberian Government in September, 1947, and I would like to also read this.

Senator Langer. Yes.

Senator Mansfield. Mr. Chairman, that looks like it might be a lengthy document. I wonder if perhaps we could not make that a part of the record and then if you had a statement in your own words, to make it at this time.

Senator Langer. That is right.

I will order it filed and printed as a part of the record.

You go ahead and tell us about it.

(The documents above referred to are as follows:)

1876/L

September 11, 1947

Gentlemen:

In respect of your proposed Plan or Immigration Scheme which you were good enough to submit to Government through this Department, and your subsequent meetings with members of the Government as a Committee, to discuss with you certain phases thereof which needed clarification, I am instructed by Government to advise its acceptance of the said Plan as the basis upon which immigration into Liberia, under the auspices of your League, will be accepted, with the following provisos:

1. Government will afford such facilities as might be available at the time, for their landing, temporary stay in Monrovia, and final embarkation to the points of their destination for settlement; all expenses involved in such matters to be paid by the League.

2. After completing the Settlement near Grand Cess, succeeding arrivals of immigrants shall be distributed over the several Counties and Provinces of the Republic, the immigrants being free to choose any city, town or settlement within any County of Province for their settlement.
3. That no separate set-up or distinct political entity independent of Government will be allowed; nevertheless appointment of Township and City Officials for the new Settlement will be permitted and made upon recommendation of the settlers in keeping with the laws of the Republic relating to same.
4. That the Immigrants coming out to Liberia would be selective, without criminal records and bearing good name, reputation and character in the United States of America.

Faithfully yours,

/s/ CHAS. T. O. KING,

ACTING SECRETARY OF STATE.

Messrs. Benjamin Gibbons & Thorgues Sio,
President and Associate Delegate of the
Universal African Nationalist Movement, Inc.,
Monrovia, Liberia.

570/L

April 22, 1948

Dear Mr. Gibbons:

It is with sincere appreciation that I acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 7th instant, giving some interesting information on the activities of your Organization, The Universal African Nationalist Movement, Inc.

I have found great pleasure in conveying the felicitations of your organization to His Excellency, the President of Liberia and my colleagues of the Cabinet, and have carefully noted the efforts which the Movement is putting forth to ensure a satisfactory realization of your laudable plans.

I can assure you again, as in the past, that the Government and people of Liberia are not only looking forward to the success of this Movement, but are willing to cooperate with you in every possible and legitimate way.

I shall welcome from time to time whatever information you may convey in connection with any new developments of the Organization.

With sentiments of esteem and distinguished consideration, I remain, dear Mr. Gibbons,

Very truly yours,

/s/ GABRIEL L. DENNIS,

SECRETARY OF STATE.

Mr. Benjamin Gibbons,

President, Universal African Nationalist Movement, Inc., Liberty Hall, 100-2 West 116th Street, N.Y. 26, New York.

Mr. Gibbons. Mr. Chairman and Senator Mansfield and other gentlemen of the committee, and my colleagues, in asking the United States Government to enact this bill we do so because of the need of financial and material assistance.

Liberia was created as a refuge for people of our race who may desire to go there and take part in the present and future development. But, as you may have heard from the documents I read, the Government offers every assistance that it is able to give, but because of its present condition, all expenses involved in putting through this matter would have to be borne by our organization.

Senator Langer. For the record, I think you ought to say just what Liberia is. It is a republic, and so on; the President is elected by the people. Just go ahead and tell us about it.

Mr. Gibbons. Liberia is a republic sponsored by this country under the American Colonization Society. Now, it is patterned after this Government. It has three branches, the legislature, the judiciary, and the executive.

You have freedom of speech, freedom of action, the same as in this country. The people who formed that government were living here before, and they went over there, and set up that republic.

Senator Langer. Would you mind putting in the aid that they got from the United States at the time they organized?

Mr. Gibbons. Yes, thank you, sir.

Senator Langer. Those who will read the record, the Senators, will be very much interested in that.

Mr. Gibbons. Of course, under the Colonization Society, for over a couple of decades the people received aid directly from the United States Government, and then it has -- Liberia has -- been receiving aid consistently up to 1921, somewhere along that time. It obtained a loan from the United States, and then just recently it got another loan, so that the whole economic affairs in Liberia have been aided consistently by the United States Government.

Senator Mansfield. How many people are living in Liberia at the present time, roughly?

Mr. Gibbons. About 2,800,000.

Senator Mansfield. Is the Firestone Rubber Company still interested in rubber plantations in that republic?

Mr. Gibbons. Yes, I think so, Senator Mansfield. It is doing great work there, the Firestone Company.

Senator Mansfield. Of course, I suppose you understand that if anyone does go to Liberia, as the Government points out in its paper which you read to the committee, it will not be a paradise, it will take a lot of hard work because you have got a lot of virgin country there, and it will be something that people will have to work at to achieve anything out of.

Mr. Gibbons. Senator Mansfield, I was in Liberia in 1947

myself, and I stayed there for about eight months. I had a chance to see the country a bit. I went into the interior, and so forth, along the littoral belt down to Cape Palmas. It is true that quite a lot of unoccupied space is there, but we have the people that can clear that land. These people are prepared to do that work there. We are not thinking about just obligating people to hardship. Of course, we do need some help, but so far as the hard work, and so forth, I mean with some tools and something to tide us over for a time, we could manage very well, and so forth, and I see the prospects in that country. I know that it would not entail a tremendous lot of hardship, because in one instance the country is favorable to us coming there, that it wants us there, and it would give every assistance, and the clearing of land would be something that we all know about.

Senator Mansfield. What I had in mind was that it would not be an easy job. It would have to be pioneering in a certain sense once again to really clear the country and make your tracts workable and able to give you a livelihood.

Mr. Gibbons. Surely; yes, sir, I understand. I appreciate that, too.

Senator Mansfield. Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask another question.

During the war this Government had an air base at Roberts Field.

Mr. Gibbons. That is right, sir.

Senator Mansfield. Is that airfield still in operation, do you know?

Mr. Gibbons. Yes, sir; it is.

Senator Mansfield. Is it being maintained by this Government or the Liberian Government?

Mr. Gibbons. It is, I think, a joint effort, sir.

Senator Mansfield. I see.

Mr. Gibbons. A joint effort between Liberia and this country.

Senator Mansfield. I did not know; I just wanted to find out.

Mr. Gibbons. I am not so definite about it myself, but I know that it was built there by the United States and, naturally, under lend-lease, and so forth, the same as the harbor, the port, was constructed, I think the airfield comes under that same plan.

Senator Mansfield. I see.

Senator Langer. How much vacant land is there to be colonized there?

Mr. Gibbons. At the present time about two-thirds, Mr. Chairman; about two-thirds of Liberia, Mr. Chairman, is unoccupied; two-thirds of the land area is unoccupied.

Senator Langer. Will you state for the record and tell us just about how much territory there is there, comparing it to states in the United States.

Mr. Gibbons. Well, Mr. Chairman, Liberia is only 43,000 square miles, just about the size of the State of Ohio, and, well, it is just sparsely populated. We have, say -- it is 43,000 square miles, and we would have about 35,000 square miles unoccupied.

Senator Langer. Go ahead and just proceed. I just wanted to get that in the record.

Mr. Gibbons. We are asking that this matter be given careful consideration. We have every faith in the committee and --

Senator Langer. Mr. Gibbons, you are not going into it as fully as I should like you to. Tell us about that enormous seacoast you have there, the character of the land, how the people are going to make a living there. Just go in and tell it like you would tell it to me when you are sitting down in my office before I introduced the bill.

Mr. Gibbons. Liberia has 35 miles of seacoast, and quite a lot of fish. Fisheries would make a good industry; all types of seafood. You can gather all types around Liberia.

The land is fertile, virgin soil. They have two types of soil. They have high soil and low soil, is what they call it -- that is what they use there. Practically anything you plant in Liberia will grow, that is, of a tropical nature.

At the present time, the agricultural product of the country is rubber and rice, and so forth, but that is because of the

lack of implements to organize a real agricultural system.

Cattle can be raised there. Now, that gives quite an interesting industry. You can raise livestock of all descriptions, and so forth.

You can raise cotton. Cotton would make a great industry; quite a lot of minerals, untapped minerals, that people going there to settle could engage in and make themselves a living, yes, sir; and many other things, any number of things. Small businesses, and so forth, can be developed in that country that, with a small amount of capital, a person could make a good living in a short time.

Senator Langer. In other words, that land is so fertile that a family can live on twenty-five acres?

Mr. Gibbons. Yes, sir.

Senator Langer. And get along nicely?

Mr. Gibbons. Yes, sir; surely. That is the law in Liberia, to an individual ten acres of land is granted by law, and to a family twenty-five acres of land. Now, land can be purchased over that amount at a reasonable rate, I would say, about a dollar an acre in the interior.

Senator Langer. Because of that fact there is no communism over there, isn't that true?

Mr. Gibbons. No.

Senator Langer. Because of the fact that the men own their own homes there is no communism over there.

Mr. Gibbons. That is true. Well, the Liberian Government is strictly on the order of the United States Government, and it does not tolerate any subversiveness at all. Communists do not have a chance there; they do not have a chance.

Senator Langer. I wish you would repeat that for Senator Mansfield's benefit because he was called out for a moment.

Mr. Gibbons. Yes, sir.

The prospect of a livelihood in Liberia, Senator Mansfield, is very good. The country has 350 miles of seacoast, and the fishing industry would prosper there a great amount.

Then, the Republic is, as a whole, well watered, I mean, plenty of water around, which makes the land very fertile. Any type of tropical, you know, vegetable will grow there, with tools to till the soil, and so forth.

The livestock industry would prosper greatly because there is plenty of, you know, virgin land which could make ranches, and so forth, you know, and be plenty of food for cattle.

Now, you take in Liberia the sugar cane grows wild all over the country, and since the land produces of itself, with a little scientific addition, why, the sugar industry would boom up there, and that would provide employment for immigrants who would go there to settle, you see.

And cotton, why, cotton grows wild in that country. I brought back some. It was in 1947 that I was there, but cotton, I have seen cotton trees in that country almost grow

higher than this room, great, big bolls of cotton. I guess it is because of the richness of the soil, and practically anything, I mean, small businesses have a chance there and it only would need a start, with a small amount of financing, and a person could go there or a family could go there and make a living in a short time.

Then the fact is that the Government is interested in immigrants coming into the country, would open up every facility within its power to aid the settlers to provide a living, and so forth.

Senator Langer. As I understand it, because of the fact that under the law there a man can get twenty-five acres of land, it means that they are violently opposed to communism.

Mr. Gibbons. They are violently opposed to it, that is the truth, sir; no communism at all in Liberia.

There are yearly crops, four crops a year, cotton or corn or, well, anything like that, sugar cane -- I mean, you see, you only have two changes, that is from hot to dry. Rain, you know, you have a lot of rain, and I guess it is because the country is so, you know, thickly forested, wooded, and so forth. But crops, I mean, right now the people live there just from scratching the ground. If we have some tools to go there and work, why, we could produce an enormous amount with a little scientific addition.

Senator Mansfield. Tell me, what is the relationship between

the descendants of the Americans who went over there in 1920 or thereabouts, and the people who lived back in the hinterland?

Mr. Gibbons. Well, Senator Mansfield and Mr. Chairman, my experience tells me that they get along very good, sir, very good. Because in 1947 I noticed that the Liberian Government had changed, had made a great change, under the administration of Mr. Tubman. Homes and so forth were being built there, to bring the children, especially in the interior, to the seacoast where they could get care, hospitalization, and so forth, and there has been quite a modification in the feeling between the citizenry, and while that has grown more since that time, since that time -- well, I am quite sure that there is no difference amounting to anything now between the people. In fact, we have never heard of any dissatisfaction, or at least I have not heard of any, sir, and, I take it, that everything is satisfactory there, as satisfactory as they can expect, you see.

Senator Mansfield. Do you have a good transportation system in Liberia?

Mr. Gibbons. No, sir; that is one problem there. The Firestone Company was building roads there, but mostly leading to their plantation, and so forth, you see. I heard recently that the Government is undertaking a road-building program, but I cannot speak for that because I only read it in the papers. But I do know that they have plans to do that, and that is one of the reasons they want skilled people to come over there, to

help.

Senator Mansfield. Mr. Gibbons, could you tell me or could you tell this committee, just what the status is of immigration into Liberia at the present time? You have given us the details, but I mean, do you have any idea as to the number of people going in every year?

Mr. Gibbons. I would say, Senator Mansfield and Mr. Chairman, there are at least four or five hundred a year going in now. I know that number in 1948 went from Jamaica, the West Indies, alone.

Senator Mansfield. I see.

Mr. Gibbons. Just from Jamaica, and those people are doing pretty good over there. They have organized engineering companies, and so forth, and they have received government contracts from the Liberian Government, and many people have written back to us here who have gone from the United States from Florida, Virginia, all over the country, I mean our organization tried its best to propagate this work, to interest the people, and some of them who had the means took advantage of it, and they are over there.

Senator Mansfield. And they have stayed?

Mr. Gibbons. Yes, sir; sure, they have stayed. I met quite a lot of people who just went over there before 1947, just a few years before, and they are doing quite well over there. You see, that climate is consistent with black people anywhere,

you know; it is tropical and, of course, it is, well, just what we are accustomed to, you see. So they get along very nicely there.

Well, they start a business, and there is nothing, no great competition, no competition, hardly any -- yes, sir.

Senator Mansfield. Those are all the questions I have, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Langer. As I understand it, those who signed these petitions -- there are about 2,400,000 --

Mr. Gibbons. Yes, sir.

Senator Langer. (Continuing) -- their theory is that a lot of folks were brought over here from Africa against their will.

Mr. Gibbons. That is true; that is historical.

Senator Langer. They were brought over here, and our Government was responsible for their being received here and being kept here, and that, therefore, you and your associates and friends deem it the duty of our Government to give them a chance to go back to Africa if they want to go.

Mr. Gibbons. Yes, sir; Mr. Chairman and Senator Mansfield, we feel it is a moral obligation on the part of the United States Government to aid in this matter.

Now, the Liberian Government, as I before stated, was set up as a refuge for black people from this country who would express their desire to go there to live, and now that we are ready to do that we are requesting the Government to give us the necessary aid

Settlement in Liberia by us would not mean that we are dissatisfied with the United States or we want to go away, as we would say, from the United States. It is that there are unlimited opportunities in Liberia that we could engage in, that would mean that we would be more valuable to the present system in Liberia than we would be here.

Many of us are on relief; some of our children are becoming delinquent because of the lack of adequate accommodations or opportunities. You know, the schools are turning out hundreds of thousands every year, and there is no place for them. I mean, the present affairs do not seem to be able to absorb these people, and we feel it is our duty to be interested in our own people, and Liberia offers such an opportunity. The only thing is that it does not have the means to finance it. They have granted us the privilege of coming. Even the legislature of Liberia cannot pass any laws to forbid us from coming. But it would not be good for us to go there unprepared.

So, while we want to go, we want to get the assistance of the United States Government, and that assistance would spread throughout Africa, that the United States Government aids people of African descent from here to go back to Africa to establish themselves in homes and be able to take care of themselves, that would swell the interest of Africans all over the world for this country. I am speaking now of something that I know to be a fact.

We have no one else that we can ask for help. We have not

thought of anyone else. We do not intend to. Since 1948 we have been imploring the government to give us this aid because it is necessary, and for every dollar that the United States Government would spend in this matter, why, we are sure that ten dollars could be returned, because Africa is a raw, virgin land. There are unlimited resources there, and we would not want to trade with any country but the United States Government, trade between Africa and the United States Government.

I cannot see why the United States Government should not take an active part in this matter and help us to get there so that we can be useful to ourselves as well as to produce things that would be used by American manufacturers and industrialists.

Senator Langer. In other words, it would relieve the congestion in a place like New York?

Mr. Gibbons. Correct; yes, sir; that is true.

Senator Langer. And hundreds of people now on relief there want to get away from there, is that right?

Mr. Gibbons. Yes, sir; that is right. It is quite true. I mean, I cannot conceive of the idea that this matter would not be looked into promptly. I can almost see that the government will give it its cooperation because it is a worthy cause. It is something that will be -- I mean it will be a great thing in the future, a great thing in the future, I repeat. I mean with the establishment of a black nation able to handle the resources of West Africa, with aid from the United States, I am quite sure

that any economist could see what would be the results of that.

Of course, Africa produces any number of raw materials, and all they need is some assistance; all they need is some assistance so that we can get organized and get going.

Senator Langer. Would you select the people who want to go over there? Can anyone go who wants to? Will you explain that.

Mr. Gibbons. Under the agreement of the Liberian Government, the immigrants would have to be selected for a time, you see. For instance, well, the projects we anticipate developing there, agriculture, education, health, industry, and so forth, people who would fit into those categories would be the ones to go, to prepare the ground.

Now, the Liberian Government, in my estimation, took that position just in order to see what would be done. After adequate preparation had been made in Liberia, I think that they would change their policy and permit -- because, for instance, in my case if I go to Liberia and begin to develop, and am able to take care of my family, there should not be any objection about my family coming after. But first some preparation must be made, so that the first contingent of people would be technicians to prepare the way for additional arrivals of settlers.

Senator Langer. Mr. Gibbons, I was interested, among other things, in what you said about delinquency of the young folks over in some of these towns, large towns, in this country. You think it would tend to wipe out this delinquency because these young

folks would have a chance to work --

Mr. Gibbons. Yes, indeed.

Senator Langer. (continuing) -- and succeed over there?

Mr. Gibbons. Mr. Chairman, I guarantee that it would be the thing that would answer the purpose, because we have right now in our organization in New York City any number of youngsters coming there every day asking for assistance, and so forth. We do not have it to give to them -- we give what we have.

Some of them become vagrants around the streets, and so forth, and they are willing to go; they are willing to go, but it is just that they have got to be helped to go, you see, and the delinquency -- I mean, I visited the prison at times, and the prisons are full of them, hospitals are full, you see. It is all because they do not get the proper attention, and so forth. I mean, I am not blaming anyone for this, but I think it is our own business to see about these things ourselves. So that Liberia would be the answer to that; it would be the answer.

Senator Mansfield. I have no questions. Mr. Gibbons has been a very interesting witness, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Langer. You may proceed, unless you are through. Is there anything else you want to say? Your clergy are interested, are they not?

Mr. Gibbons. Yes, sir.

Senator Langer. I know several of them talked to me about it. Have you a clergyman here with you?

Mr. Gibbons. Two, sir.

Senator Langer. We would like to hear their testimony.

Mr. Gibbons. This is Mr. Barnett.

Senator Langer. State your name and address, please.

TESTIMONY OF SAMUEL A. BARNETT,
FIFTH VICE PRESIDENT, UNIVERSAL AFRICAN NATIONALIST
MOVEMENT, INC.

Mr. Barnett. I am Samuel A. Barnett, native of the Island of Jamaica. I came to these United States in the year 1906, the 18th day of December, and from thence I have been a dweller in this land.

I left it twice, once for ten months, when I went to Africa to look through Africa myself, and I made a careful study there, including Nigeria, and Liberia. I have been there, and I saw the soil. It looks to me as though if you throw it on the skin of a plant it will almost grow, from the things that I have seen there. It is a thousand pities that men who have industrious skill in them and are desirous of putting their efforts in cannot manage to go down there because of the lack of finance.

Senator Langer. Will you identify yourself further. What religious denomination do you represent, and give us your age and your experience.

Mr. Barnett. I am a Seventh Day Adventist, and my age now is -- I am in my ninety-third year. I am very active. I have many trade, mastered them, such as turning out lumber. I can have a

group of men, take them into the forests, and turn out all kind of lumber, boards, shingles, because that was my duty in the Island of Jamaica.

I was working for the building society president, Mr. Ewing Clark, an English gentleman, on his property.

In 1904, when we had that terrible hurricane, the large Baptist Church in Savanna la Mar and the one in Montego Bay, it ripped off the roofs, and Mr. Clark came to me to get out mahogany lumbers and shingles for the repair of those two buildings, and they were each a hundred years old.

I left when I finish getting those lumbers. I told him I am going to sea, rather, and he wished me Godspeed, and if I come back I should look him up.

From thence I never have had a chance to go back because I was studying all kinds of other things which today I am a master of.

Senator Langer. You say you are 90 years old. For the record state where you live.

Mr. Barnett. Yes, sir. I live in New York City. I lived in the Island of Jamaica where I came from, in the Parish of Westmoreland, the District of Mount Pleasant.

From there I took my first voyage from Jamaica, and I landed in Russia. We carried a load of dyewood, which makes the aniline dye, and when we discharged that cargo there, we took on another cargo at the time when San Francisco burned out, and

brought it into Swansea, Wales, to a shingle factory there, and there we delivered the lumber to cut up for shingles to go to San Francisco.

Then I joined a large steamship called the Exeter City, and I acted as quartermaster aboard that ship, and steered that ship right into Sandy Hook Harbor on the 18th day of September, 1906.

I get my discharge, V.G., V. G., V.G., very good, very good, very good, so I am an able seaman, I can stand behind an compass any time of the day.

Senator Mansfield. Mr. Barnett, how long have you been interested in this proposed movement to Liberia?

(7) Mr. Barnett. Senator, to tell you the truth, sir, all my life I was interested in Africa, and for that very reason I went there in 1908. I went to Liverpool -- I came here on the 18th day of September, 1906, and I came ashore and worked, and in 1908, the 20th day of June, I take a vessel from Pier 59 called the City of Brooklyn, and went away to Liverpool, England. They put me off at Glasgow -- not Glasgow, at Swansea, Wales. There I took the train across and got off at Langtree Station in Liverpool, a very large station which, perhaps, will not be there now, and then I inquire for a place to stay, and I was recommended to one Mr. Lawrence, an old countryman of mine, who married a white lady there, and had children, and kept a boarding house.

He received me joyfully, and I stayed there for three months, and then I joined a ship, a gold-mining ship, from West Africa,

and there I went to West Africa and stayed ten months.

Senator Mansfield. Do you approve this idea completely?

Mr. Barnett. Sir?

Senator Mansfield. You are in favor of this idea?

Mr. Barnett. Oh, yes, sir. I am one of the founders of this organization. I am wishing every moment that the United States, with her pioneering skill, could give us consideration, and she would never regret it. She would never regret it. In fact, we would be a bulwark behind this government in Africa, and I know the African people, after seeing that we have been helped by the United States Government, the influence of that help, and with our praise for this nation, that would go through Africa like a burning fire, because I know the people, I know their appreciation for good works.

Senator Langer. Are there people in the South who, because of the mechanization on the farms down there, have not got as much work as they used to have when they picked cotton by hand, are they interested in going over to Liberia?

Mr. Barnett. Yes, sir. Many of them have written to our headquarters in New York, men with carts and horses and plows and everything. We have to tell them that we are waiting on the United States Government to grant us our subsidy and request, and as soon as that is granted there will be an avalanche of farmers from these United States, an avalanche of them ready to go down.

Senator Langer. You will have to excuse us because we have got to go back to the Senate to vote on an important matter.

Mr. Barnett. Yes, sir.

Senator Mansfield. May I suggest that any of the other witnesses who would have liked to have been heard, to leave with this committee a record, and we will incorporate those remarks by you folks into the record of the hearings.

Senator Langer. Some of them want to testify orally.

Senator Mansfield. I see.

Senator Langer. I will hear them tomorrow and give the record to you and the other member of the committee.

Supposing we meet in Room 424 Senate Office Building at 4:00 o'clock tomorrow, provided I can get through here before that time.

(Whereupon, at 5:35 o'clock p.m., the subcommittee recessed, to reconvene at 4:00 o'clock p.m., Thursday, June 4, 1953, in Room 424, Senate Office Building.)

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S. 138

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 7 (legislative day, JANUARY 6), 1953

Mr. LANGER introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

A BILL

To provide aid to persons in the United States desirous of migrating to the Republic of Liberia, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*
3 That it is hereby declared to be the policy of Congress to
4 cooperate with the Republic of Liberia in furthering the
5 interests and welfare of large numbers of persons who are
6 residing in the United States and who desire to emigrate to
7 and settle permanently in the Republic of Liberia. It is
8 the intent of Congress that the benefits and provisions of
9 this Act shall apply to citizens of the United States, and
10 aliens who are lawful residents in the United States, who
11 may qualify as eligible for citizenship in the Republic of

1 Liberia, and who by character, physical fitness, and climatic
2 adaptability may qualify as migrants to be permanently
3 settled in the Republic of Liberia, and who shall have vol-
4 untarily expressed a desire to become migrants under the
5 provisions of this Act.

6 SEC. 2. The President is hereby authorized and di-
7 rected to enter into negotiations with the Government of
8 the Republic of Liberia for the purpose of obtaining the
9 consent of that country to the migration and permanent
10 settlement of individuals assisted in accordance with the
11 provisions of this Act. The President shall further nego-
12 tiate with the Government of the Republic of Liberia to
13 secure reasonable guaranties that safety of life and limb and
14 freedom of action for the migrants while under Liberian
15 rule will be assured; that the Government of the Republic
16 of Liberia will earnestly prohibit and punish any act or
17 acts of intolerance or persecution, either political, social,
18 or economic, of the migrants because of their condition as
19 migrants; and that the migrants while aliens in the Re-
20 public of Liberia shall enjoy all the privileges and immuni-
21 ties of any other aliens resident in the Republic of Liberia,
22 and that, after naturalization, they shall enjoy all the priv-
23 ileges and immunities of other citizens of the Republic of
24 Liberia. The provisions of this section shall be a condition
25 precedent to other provisions of this Act.

1 SEC. 3. There is hereby created a commission to be
2 known as the Liberian Migration Commission, consisting of
3 three members to be appointed by the President, by and
4 with the advice of the Senate, for a term ending June 30,
5 1954, and one member of the Commission shall be desig-
6 nated by him as Chairman. Each member of the Commis-
7 sion shall receive a salary at the rate of \$10,000 per annum.
8 The Commission may employ necessary personnel, including
9 technicians, without regard to the civil-service laws or the
10 Classification Act of 1923, as amended, and make provision
11 for necessary supplies, facilities, and services to carry out
12 the provisions and accomplish the purposes of this Act. It
13 shall be the duty of the Commission to formulate and issue
14 regulations, necessary under the provisions of this Act, and
15 in compliance therewith, for the migration of eligible persons
16 to the Republic of Liberia. It shall also be the duty of the
17 Commission to report on February 1, 1950, and semiannu-
18 ally thereafter to the President and to the Congress on the
19 situation regarding the migration of eligible persons to Li-
20 beria. At the end of its term the Commission shall make a
21 final report to the President and to the Congress.

22 SEC. 4. (a) Under such regulations as the Commis-
23 sion may prescribe, any citizen of the United States, and
24 any alien who is a lawful resident of the United States,
25 who is in good physical condition and is capable by reason

1 of his training, adaptability, intelligence, and ambition of
2 becoming a self-sustaining settler in the Republic of Liberia,
3 and who desires to become a migrant and settler in such
4 country, may file an application on blanks prepared and
5 supplied by the Commission requesting assistance in migrat-
6 ing to and permanently settling in the Republic of Liberia.
7 Such application shall furnish such information as will enable
8 the Commission to properly assess and evaluate the qualifica-
9 tions of the applicant. If the applicant is a householder,
10 he may make application for all the members of his house-
11 hold as a unit. The application of a person responsible for
12 the support and maintenance of children under the age of
13 sixteen years shall not be favorably acted upon unless such
14 children are to accompany such applicant on his migration,
15 or unless he has made adequate provision for their support
16 and maintenance pending their transfer to join the applicant
17 in the Republic of Liberia.

18 (b) The following persons shall not be eligible for
19 migration under this Act: Escaped convicts or fugitives from
20 justice, persons under indictment and awaiting trial, persons
21 who by reason of past criminal offenses are poor risks of
22 becoming law-abiding and self-sustaining settlers in the
23 Republic of Liberia, persons applying for migration for the
24 purpose of defrauding creditors, and such other persons as the
25 Commission may reasonably believe are likely to become

1 public charges or social liabilities in the Republic of Liberia
2 or who are otherwise unacceptable to the Government of the
3 Republic of Liberia. The findings of the Commission with
4 respect to the eligibility of any person for migration under
5 this Act shall be final.

6 SEC. 5. (a) The Commission is authorized to lease,
7 furnish, and equip such office space in the District of Colum-
8 bia and elsewhere as it may deem necessary; order goods
9 and services from private individuals or concerns in the
10 ordinary course of trade; requisition any department, board,
11 or agency of the United States for any available goods,
12 services, or facilities which may be necessary in carrying
13 out the provisions of this Act, without affecting the proper
14 operation of such department, board, or agency; provide
15 transportation by land and by sea to qualified applicants
16 migrating under the provisions of this Act, and to their
17 households, from the initial point of departure in the United
18 States to the point of settlement in the Republic of Liberia,
19 and to contract with land and maritime transportation com-
20 panies for such purposes to the extent necessary by reason
21 of the fact that such transportation facilities are not avail-
22 able from the Government of the United States; and provide
23 adequate subsistence, medical care, and other necessities of
24 life for the migrants during transit and until finally settled
25 at the point of settlement.

1 (b) With the consent of the Government of the Re-
2 public of Liberia, the Commission is authorized to select or
3 approve suitable sites for settlement of migrants in the
4 Republic of Liberia; to establish and operate reception and
5 disembarkation centers, supply depots, commissaries, tempo-
6 rary housing at points of settlement, dispensaries, pharma-
7 cies, and first-aid stations, and such other buildings and
8 facilities as are necessary and proper to safeguard the health
9 of the migrants and to carry out the purposes of this Act,
10 together with all necessary equipment and personnel.

11 (c) The Commission is further authorized, within the
12 limits of such funds as may be appropriated to it, to supply
13 tools, equipment, materials, and technical assistance and
14 advice, to the migrants when necessary to assist them in
15 becoming self-sustaining members of their communities; to
16 make loans to individuals, partnerships, or corporations com-
17 posed of migrants, in meritorious cases, not to exceed
18 \$1,000 in any case, on reasonably liberal terms and condi-
19 tions, as initial capital for business and industrial enterprises
20 in Liberia; and to cooperate with and render technical and
21 other assistance to the Government of the Republic of
22 Liberia, or its responsible agencies, in the establishment of
23 towns and rural districts, improvements of conditions of pub-
24 lic sanitation, construction of public works and facilities,
25 reclamation of land, development and improvement of utili-

1 ties, schools, hospitals, and transportation facilities, encour-
2 agement of business enterprise and capital investments in
3 the Republic of Liberia, and the construction, development,
4 or encouragement of such other public works or projects as
5 will tend to raise the standard of living and increase the
6 productivity of the Republic of Liberia.

7 SEC. 6. Such sums as are necessary to carry out the
8 provisions of this Act are hereby authorized to be appro-
9 priated.

10 SEC. 7. The authority conferred by this Act shall ex-
11 pire on June 30, 1954. This Act shall become effective
12 upon the date of its enactment.

82d CONGRESS
1st Session

S. 138

A BILL

To provide aid to persons in the United States
desirous of migrating to the Republic of
Liberia, and for other purposes.

By Mr. LINGER

JANUARY 7 (legislative day, JANUARY 6), 1953
Read twice and referred to the Committee on
Foreign Relations